

constructed and installed in under an hour. And Vijay thought of everything, including foam strips around the edges so no one cuts their hands and a pass through for merchandise and payment.

“We want our customers to feel safe,” he said. “It is a weird time with COVID.”

The corner store just outside of town that Vijay and his wife Nikita have run for almost two-and-a-half years is doing good weathering the pandemic. Vijay says 2020 brought with it ups and downs, but foot traffic is steady for now.

One bright spot Vijay says has been the Lottery, and his sales are up over the previous year.

“It makes the customers happy,” he said.

VALUE SPOT in Simpsonville

Sajel Patel has a talent for organizing. That gift came in particularly handy last year.

During the shutdown lottery tickets that couldn’t be picked up began to pile up at the Value Spot in Simpsonville, the store she has run alongside her husband Neil for 12 years. A system of labeling tickets with stickers she developed before the pandemic allowed her to manage the changes and know which games were selling best.

“I like to be organized,” Sajel said.

That skill also helped them keep the Lottery fun for their players too.

Not only did Sajel and Neil continue to do a second-chance drawing every three months in 2020 for a book of lottery tickets, they decided to add a monthly drawing for \$100 worth of tickets. To enter for a chance to win, players simply had to spend \$10 on lottery tickets in their store.

The result, lottery sales that had been up and down at the store stabilized.

“We wanted to do something to get our lottery players excited,” said Sajel. “It’s a scary time.”



Special thanks to Lottery Marketing Sales Representatives Monica Moreira, Mike Soper, Tilicia Mitchell, Jerald Addis and Terry Gist for their contributions that made this special issue of *Selling Points* possible.

New Games

Scheduled to launch Tues., January 5:



Launch dates and tickets are subject to change. Artwork shown is not necessarily representative of final product.

LAST DAY TO SELL
Jan. 6: Million Dollar Mega Multiplier (#1194)
Jan. 13: Money Mayhem (#1211)
Jan. 20: Triple Luck (#1230) & Wild Cash (#1201)
Jan. 27: Bonus Payday (#1235)

LAST DAY TO RETURN
Jan. 8: All Star Cash (#1234)
Jan. 15: Big \$100 Spectacular (#1218)
Jan.22: \$50 or \$100 (#1187)
Jan. 29: Ca\$h Payout (#1219) & Loose Change (#1229)

LAST DAY TO REDEEM
Jan.5: Junior Jumbo Bucks (#1182), 5X (#1221) & 20X (#1223)
Jan. 12: The \$500 (#1196), Wild Cash (#1203) & \$500,000 Jackpot (#1214)
Jan. 26: Loteria (#1129), Triple Play (#1174), Top Dollar (#1207), Lucky \$50 (#1217) & 10X (#1222)

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18+ DO NOT sell lottery tickets to any person under the age of 18. A player must be at least 18 years of age to purchase a ticket.

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SELLING Points

Lottery Retailer Newsletter

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HAPPY NEW YEAR! While now is a time to look ahead, at the South Carolina Education Lottery we would be remiss if we didn’t take a moment to look back and recognize the tremendous efforts you’ve shown during 2020. It was a challenging year. We hope as you read these stories shared by retailers around the state you’ll find similarities with your own story and know how appreciative we are of your hard work and continued support.



BNJ, LLC in Fort Mill



Food Lion in Bluffton



Fast Stop in Newberry



Little Giant in Rock Hill

BNJ, LLC in Fort Mill

Crazy.

That sums up 2020 for many of us, including Pinky Patel. Pinky and her husband Mike have been running BNJ, LLC (Scott's Food Mart) on Spratt St. in Fort Mill for going on four years. They had big plans for their store in 2020. Then the pandemic hit.

"We learned how unprepared we all are," Pinky said, describing what it was like when the first cases of COVID-19 were reported in our state. "Panic set in a bit, but then you move on and get prepared. There is no other option when you don't leave one."

Pinky and Mike jumped into action, putting up a protective shield at the counter, wearing a face mask and sanitizing as guidelines suggested. Their doors opened every morning at 6 a.m. and closed at 10 p.m.

Life continued. And it continued at a busy pace.

"It was hectic," Pinky said.

When Hurricane Florence came through in September of 2018, it damaged the canopies over the gas pumps, so they had two new canopies installed last year. The store switched from the Gulf brand to the Amoco name. They also started offering Harris Teeter Fuel Rewards and BP Rewards. All positive, big changes to juggle in the midst of a pandemic, but worth it.

"Business has been growing," Pinky said, so have lottery sales.

When it comes to selling lottery tickets, Pinky credits their secret weapon—her daughter. Players come in and ask for her daughter, and if she's not around they want to know when she'll be back.

"They claim she brings them good luck," Pinky said. "My daughter sold a \$10,000 and \$1,000 ticket to a player and word must have gotten out. It's funny, she never wins for herself, but she hands out the winning tickets."

With no plans of slowing down, Pinky and Mike expect life at the store will be just as exciting in the year ahead.

FOOD LION in Bluffton

Thank You.

These two words continue to sustain the workers at the Food Lion in Bluffton.

"It has been an eye opener, the number of people who come up to us to thank us for being here and coming to work," said Leigh Anne Hardwick, the Assistant Customer Service Manager at the Food Lion on Okatie Village Hwy. in Bluffton.

She says 2020 was an interesting year at the grocery store. Chaotic at times. Scary at times. Yet one of the most rewarding years to be working in the grocery industry.

Their customers, mostly retirees from the Sun City neigh-

borhood next door, are incredibly thankful and grateful the store has remained open to serve them. And they show their appreciation daily with kind words of thanks.

"This is our community too, and our company has always focused on service to the community," said Hardwick. "We have definitely felt how much we are appreciated."

The customer service team (pictured from left to right—Stacey Wilson, Michael DeVito, Leigh Anne Hardwick and Gillian Rasch) recognize some of their customers are nervous about coming inside the store to shop or play the Lottery, and they take extra care to make them feel safe by cleaning and sanitizing frequently touched surfaces. Under normal circumstances a reassuring smile would go a long way, but the staff's friendly and welcoming spirit shines through the face masks they all wear to protect themselves and those around them.

Activity at the customer service counter has remained steady during the pandemic, and Hardwick does her absolute best to keep her customers happy by always having the newest in lottery games available for them to enjoy.

"We know our customers well," said Hardwick. "Our customers have kept us positive. They go out of their way to let us know how much we mean to them."

It seems the feeling is mutual.

FAST STOP in Newberry

The drive thru is open.

At Fast Stop in Newberry, you don't even have to get out of your car to play the Lottery. Just pull up at the drive thru, pictured on the cover, and brothers Dee or Cee Patel will take your order. It's that simple and safe.

"Our customers who use the drive thru use it regularly," Dee said.

The drive thru was a nice convenience to have during a pandemic, but the idea wasn't born out of the outbreak. The drive thru was there when the brothers took over the store on CR Koon Hwy. in May of 2019. And it's gotten extra use this past year, with customers from the surrounding neighborhood and workers from nearby industries not only pulling up to ask for lottery tickets but items like chips and sodas too.

"We give our customers what they want," Dee said.

LITTLE GIANT CELANESE LLC in Rock Hill

Vijay Patel is a DIY pro.

The counter top sneeze guard he designed and built to provide safety for his staff and customers at the Little Giant Celenase, LLC, in Rock Hill is as impressive as it is inventive.

Following a trip to Home Depot for supplies, Vijay with help from his family had the 8' X 4' wood and plexiglass sneeze guard